



City of Seattle Boards & Commissions Notice of Appointment

Appointee Name: *David J. Isaak*

Board or Commission Name: *Seattle Human Rights Commission*

Position Title: *Member*

☒ **Appointment** ☐ **Reappointment**

***Term of Position:** *7/23/2025 to 7/22/2027*

☐ *Serving partial term (eligible for full terms thereafter)*

Appointing Authority: ☒ City Council ☐ Mayor ☐ Other: *Insert Appointing Authority*

City Council Confirmation Required? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Residential Neighborhood: *Queen Anne*

Appointee brief overview:

David's career has been grounded in a commitment to strengthening the relationship between people and the institutions that serve them, with a focus on expanding civic participation, advancing equity, and ensuring that communities can engage meaningfully in public life. Over nearly two decades in public service, he has worked at the intersection of governance, community engagement, and human rights—designing programs and systems that elevate community voice, improve accountability, and promote inclusive decision-making.

David served in senior leadership roles with the U.S. Agency for International Development, where he directed large-scale programs focused on democratic governance, rule of law, and human rights. He managed complex portfolios, led multicultural teams, and worked closely with governments, civil society organizations, and community leaders to advance justice, accountability, and inclusion. And, in his current role with the City of Bellevue, he leads a portfolio of neighborhood outreach and civic engagement programs that connect residents with local government and with one another.

David believes that inclusive civic participation and the protection of human rights are deeply interconnected. Communities are strongest when residents feel they belong, when their voices are heard, and when institutions are accountable to them.

Appointing Authority Signature:

Date Signed: *5.14.26*

Appointing Authority Printed Name and Title:

Councilmember Dionne Foster

David J. Isaak

Seattle, Washington

PROFILE

Public service leader, city planner, and democracy practitioner with nearly two decades of experience designing and leading large-scale civic engagement, governance reform, and community development initiatives across local, national, and international contexts.

Proven track record leading multicultural teams and building partnerships among government agencies, civil society organizations, and community stakeholders. Deep expertise in participatory governance, civic infrastructure, and community-centered program design.

Currently serving in local government in the Puget Sound region, leading neighborhood outreach and civic engagement programs that connect residents with municipal decision-making and strengthen inclusive participation across diverse communities.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Neighborhood Outreach and Civic Engagement Systems
Deliberative Democracy and Participatory Governance
Public Sector Leadership and Program Management
Community Partnerships and Coalition Building
Urban Governance and Participatory Planning
Equity, Inclusion, and Cross-Cultural Engagement
Public Dialogue, Facilitation, and Conflict Navigation
Policy Development and Institutional Reform

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Neighborhood Outreach Manager

City of Bellevue, Washington – Community Development Department

2025–Present

Lead Bellevue's neighborhood outreach and community engagement strategy, overseeing a comprehensive portfolio of programs designed to strengthen civic participation, neighborhood leadership, and resident connection to local government.

- Direct a citywide suite of **civic engagement and neighborhood programs** serving a diverse and rapidly growing population, including:
 - **Bellevue Essentials** – a competitive, multi-week civic leadership program engaging residents in deep learning on city operations, policy, budgeting, and governance, with alumni actively participating in boards, commissions, and community leadership roles.
 - **Experience Bellevue** – a citywide engagement platform offering immersive workshops, city tours, and interactive programming that connects residents to services, infrastructure, and decision-making processes.
 - **Cultural Conversations** – a long-running dialogue initiative that fosters cross-cultural understanding, community storytelling, and relationship-building across Bellevue's diverse communities.
 - **NeighborLink and Block Party Program** – supports resident-led neighborhood events, service activities, and community-building initiatives that strengthen social cohesion and local leadership.
 - **Neighborhood Enhancement Program (NEP)** – supports resident-driven neighborhood improvement projects through structured proposal, prioritization, and implementation processes.
- Lead strategic efforts to expand participation among historically underrepresented communities, including immigrant populations, multilingual residents, and communities with limited prior engagement in civic processes.
- Oversee language access and inclusive outreach strategies, ensuring programs and communications are accessible across Bellevue's highly diverse population.
- Supervise and mentor staff responsible for program delivery, community partnerships, and public engagement initiatives, fostering a collaborative and high-performing team culture.
- Facilitate public meetings, community dialogues, and cross-cultural engagement events, often navigating complex community dynamics and competing priorities.
- Build and sustain partnerships with neighborhood associations, community-based organizations, nonprofits, and informal community leaders to strengthen grassroots engagement and trust.
- Coordinate across city departments—including planning, transportation, public safety, and utilities—to align engagement efforts and improve responsiveness to community needs.
- Contribute to citywide initiatives focused on community trust, civic participation, and inclusive governance, including preparation for major regional events and long-term growth planning.

Director, Office of Education and Democracy & Governance

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

U.S. Embassy Maputo, Mozambique | 2023–2025

Led one of USAID's largest integrated portfolios, combining education, governance, and civic engagement to strengthen democratic institutions and public service delivery.

- Directed a \$175M portfolio spanning primary education, democratic governance, rule of law, civil society, and independent media.
- Designed and implemented the U.S. Government's strategy for Mozambique's 2024 general elections, including civic education, electoral integrity, media engagement, and legal defense for detained civil society actors.
- Led national-level civic engagement initiatives reaching millions of citizens through community radio, media partnerships, and public outreach campaigns.
- Partnered with the Attorney General's Office and Supreme Court to:
 - Launch Mozambique's first digital asset declaration system for public officials
 - Support digitization of national case tracking systems
 - Expand access to justice through mobile court initiatives
- Managed engagement with the Global Partnership for Education (\$300M+ pooled fund), aligning donor investments and national education strategy.
- Coordinated with multilateral partners (World Bank, UN agencies, IMF) to align governance and public financial management reforms.
- Supervised 11 staff overseeing 13 mechanisms and 150+ personnel, providing leadership, coaching, and performance management.
- Navigated complex political and operational challenges, including democratic backsliding, protests, and institutional instability.

Director, Office of Democracy, Rights, and Governance

USAID – U.S. Embassy Kathmandu, Nepal

2019–2023

Directed one of USAID's most complex democracy portfolios, focused on institutional reform, civic participation, and public accountability.

- Managed an \$80M+ portfolio across electoral reform, rule of law, human rights, and civic engagement.
- Designed and led a \$46M flagship democratic reform initiative integrating civic education, local governance strengthening, and digital engagement tools.

- Supported governance reform across all 753 municipalities, enabling participatory planning, improved procurement systems, and local service delivery improvements.
- Led national voter engagement campaigns generating 40M+ social media interactions, the most successful youth-targeted campaign in South Asia.
- Spearheaded Nepal's successful entry into the Open Government Partnership and supported development of its first national e-governance roadmap.
- Piloted civic trust and gender audits of judicial institutions, directing resources toward underserved regions.
- Co-chaired UNDP and EU governance working groups managing \$100M+ pooled donor funds.
- Led efforts supporting anti-trafficking policy reform, contributing to Nepal's ratification of the Palermo Protocol.
- Supervised and mentored a 13-person multicultural team, building leadership pipelines and strengthening institutional capacity.

Development and Stabilization Advisor

Southern Syria Assistance Platform – U.S. Embassy Amman 2016–2019

Led U.S. government stabilization and governance programming in conflict-affected regions of Syria.

- Managed a \$140M portfolio supporting local governance, service delivery, and economic recovery in opposition-held and post-ISIS areas.
 - Facilitated community-led planning processes for water, electricity, health, and education services benefiting over 300,000 people.
 - Negotiated agreements between conflict actors to restore essential infrastructure, including reopening hospitals and irrigation systems.
 - Represented the U.S. government in the Syria Recovery Trust Fund, coordinating with EU and Gulf donors.
 - Produced political economy analyses and research on civic trust, service delivery, and displacement dynamics.
 - Served in frontline deployments coordinating with humanitarian and civilian partners under high-risk conditions.
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Senior Development Policy Advisor

USAID – Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning

Washington, DC | 2013–2014

Led high-level policy development connecting governance reform, inclusion, and poverty reduction.

- Co-led U.S. government strategy on ending extreme poverty, shaping global policy frameworks.
 - Co-authored USAID's first LGBT Vision for Action, advancing inclusive development policy.
 - Designed participatory policy processes engaging civil society organizations worldwide.
 - Managed evidence synthesis and worked with leading think tanks to inform policy decisions.
 - Drafted briefings for senior U.S. government leadership, including the President's Global Development Council.
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Program Officer

USAID – Madagascar and Comoros

2010–2013

- Managed monitoring, evaluation, and program design for an \$80M+ multi-sector portfolio across health, education, and humanitarian assistance.
 - Led participatory program design processes to strengthen community ownership and sustainability.
 - Served as gender advisor, integrating demographic analysis into program strategy.
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Director of Community Development

Community Development Support Association

Enid, Oklahoma | 2008–2009

- Led grassroots community development initiatives focused on housing, early childhood development, and social services.
 - Directed a \$3M capital campaign to redevelop a former Superfund site into a 40,000 sq. ft. nonprofit center.
 - Built bipartisan coalitions across local government, nonprofits, and community stakeholders.
 - Facilitated community forums and needs assessments to ensure resident-driven program design.
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Organizational Development Consultant
Habitat International Coalition – Santiago, Chile
2007

- Conducted institutional assessment of global civil society networks focused on land and housing rights.
 - Designed reform strategies to improve governance, coordination, and advocacy effectiveness.
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EDUCATION

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT),
2016 Master in City Planning (MCP)

Lund University, Sweden, 2008
M.A., Development Studies and Management

University of Oklahoma, 2003
B.A., International and Area Studies, magna cum laude

HONORS

USAID Meritorious Honor Awards (multiple)
U.S. Department of State Superior Honor
Awards MIT Urban Governance Fellowship
Harvard Caroline Cady Huey Award for Diplomatic Service

LANGUAGES

English (native)
Portuguese
(professional)
French and Spanish (intermediate)

SEATTLE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

21 Members: Pursuant to SMC 3.14.920, all members subject to City Council confirmation, 2-year terms except for the Get Engaged member who will serve a 1-year term pursuant to SMC 3.51:

- 8 City Council-appointed
- 9 Mayor-appointed
- 4 Other Appointing Authority-appointed:

Roster as of May 2026

Position Number	Position Title	Appointee Name	Term Begin Date	Term End Date	*Term Number	Appointed By
1	Member	Bryennah Quander	7/23/25	7/22/27	2	City Council
2	Member	Trevor Duston	7/23/25	7/22/27	1	Mayor
3	Member	Amy Bailey	7/23/25	7/22/27	1	City Council
4	Member	Gwen McCullough	7/23/25	7/22/27	1	Mayor
5	Member	J. Queen Adams	7/23/25	7/22/27	1	City Council
6	Member	Kyle Tibbs	1/23/24	1/22/26	1	Mayor
7	Member	Mariam Sulayman Koss	1/23/24	1/22/26	1	City Council
8	Member	VACANT	7/23/25	7/22/27	1	Commission
9	Member	Beverly Smith	7/23/24	7/22/26	1	Mayor
10	Member	Avery Hultgren	7/23/24	7/22/26	P	City Council
11	Member	Brandon Monson	7/23/24	7/23/26	P	Mayor
12	Member	VACANT	7/23/26	7/22/28	1	City Council
13	Member	Zoe Stylianides	7/23/25	7/22/27	1	Mayor
14	Member	David Isaak	7/23/25	7/22/27	1	City Council
15	Member	Kim Kkwafkwao	7/23/25	7/22/27	1	Mayor
16	Get Engaged	Hector Garcia	9/1/25	8/31/26	1	Mayor
17	Member	Phillip Lewis	7/23/24	7/23/26	1	City Council
18	Member	Katie Gonser	1/23/24	1/22/26	P	Mayor
19	Member	VACANT	7/23/25	7/22/27	1	Commission
20	Member	Nicholas Leydon	1/23/24	1/22/26	1	Commission
21	Member	Miranda Catsambas	7/23/24	7/22/26	1	Commission

Self-identified diversity chart

Appointing Authority	Male	Female	Transgender	Non-Binary	N/A	Asian	Black/ African American	American Indian/ Alaska Native	White/ non-Hispanic	Hispanic/ Latinx	Pacific Islander	Middle Eastern	Multi-racial	N/A
Mayor	4	5					2		4	1				2
Council	3	4				1	1		1				1	3
Other	1	1		1					1					1
Total	8	10		1		1	3		6	1			1	5

City Council districts represented

Council District	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	District 6	District 7	N/A
Total	2	2	2	3	2	0	7	0

*P is for partial initial term. Appointee is eligible for full terms thereafter.